

## This is the story of my life

" Just to be free again", those were the thoughts of a 13 year old girl in Berlin in August 1940. I was riding in a streetcar when a young girl in riding uniform got on. I, as a Jewish person had to stand in the back of the streetcar with the yellow star pinned to my clothes, identifying me as a Jew making it possible for anybody to take a shot at me, be it hitting, spitting or whatever, it was even encouraged by the Nazis and my only thought was, how nice it would be to be as free as the girl in the riding uniform.

### Now I AM Free

But today as I dictate this, war just broke out in the Middle East .....

I might become very emotional as I dictate this, but this here is the story of my life.

I was born in Preussisch Friedland, Germany on Aug. 23, 1927. My father was Moeses Arnoldi and he was born on Aug 3, 1887 also in Preussisch Friedland. My mother Margareta, maiden name Kirstein was born January 28, 1893 in Arnswalde.

My father had 3 sisters and 1 brother. The brother Jacob died in the first world war. The 3 sisters were Lina, Johanna and Paula. My grandfather's name was Levin Arnoldi and my grandmother was Bertha. My mother's parents were Eduard and Rebecca Kirstein. My mother had 1 sister, Trude, who later married Hans Abrahamowsky, 3 brothers, Hans, Bruno and Arthur. My father was the youngest of his siblings my mother was the oldest.

I had 2 brothers Ernst, who was born on Jan 20, 1922 and Lothar, born Nov 9, 1924





2

I remember my childhood in Preussisch friedland as a very happy one. I remember many things. My father was a butcher, had his own business and we lived behind the store. There was a beautiful garden, my mother used to sit with me on the window, during the winter it was especially cozy, when the snowflakes were falling, she was singing and playing with me. I also remember the temple. Special occasions like Simchat Torah are very much in my Mind. The ladys were sitting upstairs, the children marched around downstairs, with the Torah and the ladies threw down candies and little toys. This was a very happy and joyous time. On the other hand, I remember a terrible night when a fire broke out, the horses were being let out of the stalls and this is the reason I have a more than moderate fear of fire. (When I go away for a few days I pull out all the plugs, one of my nuttyness)

Another happy memory is of my grandmother Bertha. Every birthday she made clothes for all my dolls, set them around a small table and when I awoke on the day of my birthday, they were waiting for me. Even though I had many dolls, I was not particular fond of playing with them. The reason is unknown to me. When she died, very sadly I commented "who will dress my dolls now" I believe she died in 1930 or 31. Also the same year a cousin of my fathers, Harry Ullmann and his wife came to visit us from the States. They had weaving mills in Massachussets. I remember she brought me a Katie Cruso doll, supposedly quiet expensive but I found her very ugly looking.

They encouraged my father to come with them or shortly thereafter to follow them to the United States. That would have been a very good move, but My father insisted to stay in Germaey,





Being a very "proud" German". Then and later he always insisted that nothing could happen to him in Germany"after all I fought in the war",were his words.That did not count, later on in the late 30's his Iron Cross , his pride and joy was taken from him. We moved away from Preussisch Friedland in Jan 1931.I was 3½ years old. I remember the trainride as very scary,it was night, there was this uncertainty my parents had about the future and I seemed to have felt it. My father's relatives had bought or rented a poultry store on Weidenweg, Berlin.It was a huge store and our apartment was behind the store. My parents worked very hard but it was not successful. In the same street on the corner was a Bar , every night, especially on Saturday nights was always a lot of commotion, even fighting going on. To This day I remember exactly the feeling I had, even the smell which came from this bar or the people and I was very scared.In addition I was very concerned about my parents who were not happy and somehow I always feared for their safety.I cannot recall any other details, but from there we moved to Weissensee, Holzkircherstrasse 1. Those were new apartment buildings and it was near the Chocolate factory "Trumpf" There was always a Chocolate smell in the air, which was nice.Those were happy times. My father worked as a gardener at the jewish Cemetery. I was enrolled in the public school , about 15 Minutes away from our house This was in 1933. At almost the same time the Nazis came to power. Outstanding in my memory is a certain Sunday afternoon Suddenly a group of SS or SA men on their Motorcycle, with their Helmets on,leather belts under their chin,That always meant TROUBLE FOR THE JEWS,They shouted "Juden heraus, Saujuden, Juden verrecke, we will eliminate them" and more hateful, dangerous





statements. As I write this down, I am almost shaking as much as I did then. My mother and I stood at the window, hiding, looking out from time to time if my father was coming. Hoping that he would not come during this demonstration, fearing that they might do something to him. Shortly after I entered school, one of the girls called me a "SAUJUD".(PIGDOG).

My teacher, Mr. Haman, was an elderly man, he was not a nazi and he shouted at her, reprimanded her in a very strong manner. He really risk his life by standing up for me, a jewewish child. I did not attend this school for very long. Jews were no longer allowed to attend public schools and I was enrolled in a Jewish girls school, at Auguststrasse.

I was a good student, it was a happy time. We did not just have academics, but needlework and cooking classes. I developed very close relationships with other girls. One in particular, her name was Hella Nussbaum. My parents were very much against this friendship, because she was from Poland. My parents, being born in Germany felt this "superiority". Even Though my parents were very observant Jews, but their "GERMANess" came through.

I believe it was 1936 that we moved away from Weissensee and moved to Landsbergerstrasse 12. That was in the east of Berlin. It was between Alexanderplatz and Friedrichshain, a beautiful park, but as Jews, we were not allowed to go there. I walked to school which was about 1 hour, but I met Hella halfway and we had fun together. Sometimes we went into stores and shouted silly words to the owner, then ran away.

During the summer of 1936 I was sent to HEILBRON by the organization my father belonged to "Reichsbund juedischer frontsoldaten"

It was a fantastic time. Mr. And Mrs Victor treated me like their daughter Maria





I believe I spend 6 weeks with them. It was a very happy time. They drove me places, showered me with gifts and included me in all family activities. Marga and I had tremendous fun. They had a leather factory and were quite wealthy. Later on they immigrated to South Africa and even were ready to send papers for our family to go there. I cannot recall why this did not happen. Other times in the summer I spend with friends of my parents. Mr & Mrs Falkenstein at their little summerhouse which was an old or renovated railroadcar. Our family physician and his wife, Dr. Wollner, who had no children also invited me to their summer place. Here I would like to mention something extremely interesting. Dr. Wollner once said to me "Mein kind, I have 3 wishes for you and hope they come true; become a nurse, marry a doctor and learn spanish". As we know now all this came true. Dr. Wollner and his wife later committed suicide. At that time the jewish physicians were not allowed anymore to practice. He was allowed because he had graduated from medical school before a certain date, specified by the nazis, however he felt this was not right, the younger men should have been allowed to work.

At this point I would like to write a little about my relationship with my brothers. Ernstchen, as we called him, was a real big brother to me who always "protected" me. There was so much love, kindness and warm feelings between us. I just adored him. Unfortunately he suffered from Epilepsy and had frequent seizures. For some reason, my parents could not take care of him and he went to live in a home. I think he was happy there. We visited him every Sunday, went on picnics. I always hated to leave him. Not so good was my relationship with Lothar. I believe he hated me from the day I was born. He was never good in school





was a middle child, my good grades were always held up to him. The fact that I was a girl, all this contributed to his feelings of inferiority and dislike for me. This pattern followed us through his whole life. Our relationship at times was civilized but never good.

During some vacation I and the other girls in my school had to work at the jewisch cemetery, weeding, watering flowers etc. This was kind of morbid but we did have fun. The comeradery was great. My free time during the winter was spend with my "Kaufmansladen" this is like a grocery store. At a certain time. my father took it down from the attick, set it up and surprised me with it. My mother than played with me, she "came shopping" I loved that. While my parents supplied us with peace of mind, the political situation and persecution of the jews raised great anxiety in all of us. Our apartment consisted of 1 large, 1 small bedroom, livingroom and Dinningroom, Kitchen and bath. A law came out saying jews could not have so many rooms and we had to share it with another Family. My mothers's cousin Alfred Falk , his wife, small son and daughter moved in with us. They all lived in the big bedroom. My parents then slept in the Dinningroom so did I on the couch and my brother Lothar had the small bedroom. The Falks had to pass through our room to go to the bathroom, kitchen, which was not pleasant and at times arguments ensued. I found this so sad, at the time when everybody hated, persecuted the jews, that families should fight among them ,but I guess this is human nature/

Around this time, we found out that my father had TB. He received regular treatment. Of course it was not the best for all of us to sleep in the same room. He was not allowed to go to work, so my mother took over. First she cleaned houses for other people and then she worked in the factory "Pertrix" They made Batteries





At this time a new law came out that Jews were only allowed to go foodshopping between the hours of 4-5pm. Food was in short supply and by this time of the afternoon, little was left on the shelves in the stores. Later on during the war, the food was rationed and everybody received coupons. The Jews had it even more rationed. In the middle of the coupon was a big "J" and each little coupon which was clipped as one bought the food also had a "J". My parents had an acquaintance who owned a food-store in the market. She traded us all kinds of food for Silver and Crystal by the weight. This was dangerous to do and we did it in a very smart way. After I came home from school, I put the Silver etc in my schoolbag and went with my father by tramway to the market. I gave her the bag, she disappeared and came back with it, filled with food, meal etc.

Had we been caught we all would have paid with our life.

Aside from this danger from the Nazis, it must have been

Tremendously difficult for my parents and they brought a

terrific sacrifices by switching from strictly kosher food,

to this, in order to feed us children and be able to survive.

Among many of the restrictions for Jews were the use of parks,

beaches and many other public places. One of these restrictions

is still a minor problem to me. There were certain benches designated "NUR FUER JUDEN" (only for Jews) They were painted yellow.

To this day when I see a yellow painted bench, I get very upset

and sometimes even break out in tears. A few years ago I went

to the park close to our house and some benches had been painted

yellow and my first thought was "Oh my god are they starting

here also". It took me some time to calm down and remember where

I was. Certain fears and images will never be forgotten anymore





Despite all the hardship and terrible times there were fun and happy moments. My parents did whatever they could to protect us from all the evil going on. I am switching from sad to happy times here, but I do this purposely. Would I only describe the dangerous, fearful times, I would be overcome by emotional pain and could not write this story. As it is, as I write this, and see the words on paper I am overcome with hurt, pain, but tremendous respect for my parents who brought us through those difficult times with relative little and few emotional scars.

The situation for the Jews from the Nazis became much worse. On November 9, 1938, when I got up I saw that the windows of a Jewish kosher butcherstore were completely smashed. Written all over the remaining glass and wall was written "Juden heraus, Juden verrecke". I went to school nevertheless as every morning. As I came close to the school there was the biggest Synagogue in Berlin Oranienburgerstrasse, completely engulfed in flames. That was not enough for the Nazis, so clear in my mind today after 53 years, I see them taken the Thorahs out of the Ark and THROWING them into the fire, shouting obscenities as always "Free Germany of the Saujuden" (PIGDOGS)

Nevertheless I continued my way to school, which was just around the corner. Of course there was no school and we were sent home.

When I came home my parents had been aware of what had happened. Supposedly a Jew had killed a German man and all the Jews had to be punished. It was the KRISTALLNACHT NOV. 9, 1938.





Jews were send to the Concentrationcamps. Everybody was in a terrible state, nobody knew what to do or where to go, where to hide. My father went with my brother Lothar to some friends' house, my mother and I went to my Uncle Brunos house. It later turned out, this would have been the worst thing. At the time we were not aware of this danger. The nazis only put the wealthy jews in the Concentration camp at that time. There was a reason for it. In order to be released , each person had to commit themselves and sign that they would pay 5 "Judenraten" "Most of their money to give to the Nazis in 5 installments. So they really could have come to Brunos house, who in turn was hiding somewhere else and was not caught. Bruno lived in westberlin, a rather fancy neighborhood. The house was cpmpletely dark, and we stayed there for about 3 or 4 days, scared to death, never looking out the window, or raising the shades. We did not know where my father and brother were, what was going on, if anyone of theses people were still alive. My mother had packed a suitcase for both of us, when she opened it, it was full of towels. This shows the state of mind she was in. I can not recall what made us decide that it was safe to go home. For a little while, the situation was quiet, but soon it became worse for the Jews. Everybody tried to get the children out of Germany, to bring them to safety. My parents had no way to leave Germany. No relatives anywhere in the free world who would give them Affidavits. They made arrangements for my brother Lothar to go to Palestine (now ISRAEL) with a children's transport. For some reason, he could not go and the boat he was supposed to go on, was later turned back, not allowed to land there and did not make it anywhere.





10  
I was registered to go to Australia, also with a children's transport on June 15, 1939. The suitcases were all packed, but I had a Bursitis on my heel and therefore could not go. The next transport was scheduled for sept. 19, 1939. The war broke out on Sept. 1. 1939. and the trip of course was cancelled.

Over the years I have questioned myself many times, if I was really sick, or if it was psychosomatic. It sounds very dramatic Was I really sick or did I not want to leave my parents.

We will never know the answer to this.....

Nobody knew what would happen, now that Germany had marched into Poland and kept on marching. One thing was sure, it would become worse for the Jews.

Before I go on talking about the war, I have to say here, that uncle Bruno had gone illegally to Brussels, so had my mothers sister Trude and her husband Hans. Just a few letters arrived from them and then we did not hear from them anymore.

As expected the war brought more punishment for the Jews.

We heard that Jews, were send to Concentration camps. All regulation regarding shopping, going out etc became much stricter. Going out on the street, one took the life in ones' hand ,never knowing if one would be killed, or picked up and send away.

Only between 4-5 pm were we allowed to go to the store, the allowed rations were much more meager than those of nonjewish people.

Windows had to be covered with black shades or cloth, so that no light was shining out because of the air raid. . If we could go out in the evening we had put on little flurescent buttons or initials, in order not to run into other people. As children we always thought this was a lot of fun. At the same time the nightly bombings began and we had to go to a bombshelter





11

in our house. Of course, the Jews, had their own. Very measly built. That would have been the first to collapse. Some nights there were 2 airraids. Early in the evening ca. 11 or 12, came the british, later ~~on~~ 2 or 3 in the morning, the russians. We heard the bombs flying. One night a house 3 houses away from us was bombed. It was a place where Uniforms were made for the soldiers. When the alarm was over we saw that house completely engulfed in flames and we were afraid it may burn our house. Lothar and I thought of those nightly raids as FUN. Something different. I guess we did not grasp the severity of the situation, or maybe we had better nerves. Lothar worked for a factory where they made Batteries. PERTRIX My mother also worked there. Lothar was often so tired, that he refused to go into the shelter.

Some of our friends went to South or North America, but we had to stay. As I said before. we had nowhere to go. Initially my father had always said, he will leave only "with the last Train" It turned out to be exactly that. (I will talk about this later) My father always believed he would be safe in Germany, having fought "for his Country" in the first world war and having received the Iron Cross. That was one of the first things they took away from him.

Our friends who had a chance to leave, packed all their belongings in a "LIFT" A wooden box, the size of a huge truck. That was shipped wherever they were going. Friends of my parents who lived in our house, were ready to leave and had given us a Radio, to store for them for a while. Now Jews were not allowed to have Radios. That Radio was on top of a closet, very visible.

1940 → On Jom Kippur morning at 6 am the doorbell was ringing, at the same time there was banging at the door. Two huge SS men were there





They had come to inspect our house, if indeed we had no radio. or other things we were not supposed to have. They never said why they came, and that was done purposely in order to create tremendous fear. They did not see this Radio, had they discovered this, it would have meant certain death for my father. NEVER will I forget, she state my mother was in after they left. I am sure today she was near a heartattack,

More and more Jews were deported ,and my brother Ernst, who lived in a residential home., was also deported.

Late in Nov 1940 we received a letter that Ernst had "DIED OF A HEARTATTACK" on Nov. 22. I Have to stop here for a while. Going throught this now is alomost unbearable. I loved my brother so very much, why did he have to be killed. Such a gentle, loving, kind human beeing. My parents , were absolutely devastated, and so was I. I knew I would never see him again. I have never overcome the loss of my dear brother and to this day I am mourning him. His memory will always be with me.

The school I went to was turned into a hospital for wounded soldiers so we had to share a school with a boysschool at the Kaiserstrasse were we used to attend Services on Shabbath.

The girls had classes in the afternoon and because this gave us much less study time we also went to school on Sundays.

The religious services were conducted by our beloved Rabbi Zimet. He later lived in Poughkeepsie and I spoke to him on the phone a few years ago. Lothar even went there a few times on the Sabbath of the anniversary of his barmitzwah.

On the lighter side, I was a very eager student whenever elective subjects were offerred I took them. My parents who probably did not know better, but they made fun of my eagerness and when I wanted to take shorthand, this meant that I would have to be in school



13  
1 hour earlier, they discouraged me. To this day I am sorry I did not do it anyway.

In the middle of 1940 a new law came out, to make Life even more difficult for the jews. Every person had to wear a yellow star with the word "JUDE" in it. One had to wear it visible at all times, on the street and certainly when one opened the door. There could have been a nonjew outside and one had to be immediately identified. The trouble was that they only gave 1 patch to a person and it had to be sewn on. So we had it sewn on to our coat and when the doorbell rang, we had to put on our coat. We also had our citizenship revoked that of course meant that we had no rights and anybody could do to us whatever they wanted, no help from any police or government was available to us. We did receive some kind of document. Grey linnen, with a big "J" "Statenloss" (No citizenship) Every jewish female had to take on the middle name Sara, unless she had a jewish name, every male, Israel. My fathers name was Moses, so he was easily identified without the added name.

I believe it was in early 1941 that we received a letter from my mothers brother Bruno from SANTO DOMINGO. Nobody knew where that was. He wrote to us that he had escaped from a concentration camp in Gurs, France and had walked over the pyrenean to Portugal. There he encountered officials from the Joint committee who offered him to go to Santo Domingo and he could now send for some relatives to come there. He did send us a visa. We were so very happy. Many people questioned if this was wise, not knowing what expected us there or know anything about that country. How bad could it be, what chances did we take, it was this or certain death in Germany. At that point we probably would have gone to the moon. We heard that every day people were transported to concentration camps. It took some doing to get all the papers





14  
There was a great deal of excitement, we needed physical examinations. My father had TB. He had some treatment "Pneumotorax" where air is pumped into the lungs. He was doing quite well, but no country wants someone with TB and we were very afraid it would show on the X-ray. Well for some reason it came out ok. Either they overlooked it, they wanted us out, but they did not see it and we got a clean bill of health. Then one day we had to go to some office to obtain certain papers, this turned out to be a very frightening experience. 2 SS men, with 2 huge dogs came into the room, got my brother Lothar and said "Come with us" Not informing us where to, for what purpose or anything at all. We were so afraid not knowing if we would ever see him again. He came back after about 1 hour, to us it had seemed like an eternity. All they had asked him was to move some furniture. This was their scare tactics always.

Now began the preparations for the trip to Santo Domingo. First of all we each had to have 1 suitcase made to order, measurements instructed by the Nazis. Then we had to select very carefully what to take. How much could fit into one suitcase. In addition certain items were not allowed to be taken out. For instance no Jewelry, silverware only 2 sets per person. Actually we had given most of our valuables already previously to the Nazis, as had been demanded.

After we had packed the suitcases, someone from the government came and inspected the content, as a matter of fact I remember that my parents did the packing with this man present. He then had to seal it, so that we had no further access to it. The only valuable my parents had left, were 2 silver candleholders. They had belonged to my father's parents and were given to my parents on their wedding day (Aug 24/20





Aside from any possible monetary value they had a very great sentimental value. The Inspector was an elderly man, seemingly not to be a Nazi. He looked at the candleholders and said "Well they are tin, you can take them" with those words he sealed the suitcases. Shortly thereafter, the day came of our departure, and to say goodbye to our relatives who had lived with us and to my father's sister, Thate Lina, Uncle Arthur, Ruthchen and Jochem. As I type this I feel the pain I was experiencing then, maybe even stronger, being aware of what lay in store for them and the terrible time for all of us Jews, of which we were yet the lucky ones, being able to live relatively peaceful in another country. We were sure we would never, never see them again. We were sure they would be transported to the concentration camp and certain death. It was an undescrivable sad feeling that we were heading into a peaceful life and they into "no life".

We left from Potsdamer Platz. There we said "Good bye" to them and I will never forget the emotions then.

As we went into the train and it pulled out of the station, waving to them will be imprinted in my mind forever!!!!

No human being should go through such torture, what horror, that a brother and sister should be separated, knowing one would be free, the other one having to stay, to be killed. It is 50 years ago this month, Oct 22, 1941, that we left.

That trainride very strongly reminded me of the ride 10 years earlier out of Preussisch Friedland. Only this one was much worse.

We were never really sure, that we would be able to leave Germany and that nothing would interfere. The Nazis always had another torture waiting. Having gone through those terrible times we were always expecting something bad to happen. We





dared not to hope that we would be really free.

On the train, which went through France and into Spain, we were told not to hide anything valuable, and try to smuggle it over the border, out of Germany. A day before, a whole transport of Jews, trying to leave Germany were send back, because one woman had goldpieces sewn into her suitjacket. We were told to throw anything that we might have, out the window.

In France we had to get out of the train, and be "Inspected". Some of us had to strip completely and some women were even examined internally, to be sure nothing was hidden "ANYWHERE". As we crossed the tracks, my father who still had a gold ring with a pale blue stone in it, that had belonged to his mother, dropped it onto the tracks, My brother caught it, not known to my father. It was very dangerous to have done this.

After being checked, we were allowed to go back into the train, and on to Spain. We arrived in San Sebastian. Spain had just been through a civil war and it was a horrible sight.

People were starving, dogs close to death were running around looking for food. We were placed in a beautiful Hotel, but food was extremely scarce. We stayed there for 2 or 3 days. Went for walks, could not do anything else. Our family of 4 had only been allowed to take 10 mark each out of Germany, which brought it to \$ 10,- for us 4.

We Left for Lisbon, Portugal. There we stayed in a Pension. They certainly did not give us first class accommodation.

Soon we discovered that there were bedbugs, the food was horribly greasy, everything was cooked with Olive oil, very hard for us to digest. We did not understand the language, had no money to spare, but the worst feeling was the fear, that Hitler might still march into Portugal. We did not know when we would board





the ship. We were in touch with the jewisch agancy who made all the neccesary arrangement for our eventual departure. Finally the day came when we could boared the Ship, "THE PERPA PINTO". We had been in Lisbon about 3 weeks, so I think it was about the 14 of Nov.1941 that we left for S.D. The ship was not exactly a luxus liner. We were located on the lowest deck, it was actually the luggage compartment. (c argo) Well it really did not matter to us, it was a means of getting to freedom. Their|was no privacy. We slept in bunkbeds, 3 high. the place was completly open. and the sailors, who were stationed one deck higher, could and did watch|us all the time. We were all seasick, the food was terrible and the uncertainty about this new , relatively unknown country , made us quite sad. We then met other people who were also headed for S.D. and their relatives. After 3 uncomfortable weeks,were one was sometimes bathered by sailors, we arrived in S.D on Dec.7,1941. One sailor was always after me, I was really only a child. asking me to kiss him. I did not understand his language but his gestures were quite clear. Onkel Bruno was at the pier and the reunion was quite emotional We were transported into the city, which at that time was called CIUDAD TRUJILLO. We stayed in a hotel and it was our first night sleeping under a mosquito net. One felt like "fenced in ". The weather was hot and humid, very uncomfortable., bugs were flying around the lamp, falling into the food. The next morning we set out in a station wagon on our way to Sosua, our real destination. At that time the roads were very bad. Over mountains and it took 12 hours to get to Sosua. On that trip I made acquaintance for the first time with an "OUTHOUSE" in Santiago, but at the time, it was for me a very neccesary place.





We arrived in Sosua, BATEY, the center of the settlement late in the evening. In the center, was the administration building, the general store, a coffeehouse, the barber, the hospital. Also the barracks for single men, they slept about 20 in one barrack. The Young girls had little rooms, 2 persons to a room with showers in the middle of the barracks and of course outhouses. These same accommodations were also for couples. However my uncle lived on the Farm ½ hour away from the center. it was called FERROCARIL("Train") is the german translation. We were driven there. His house consisted of 2 bedrooms, a kitchen and a veranda, the place where "LIFE TOOK PLACE" and <sup>the</sup> outhouse. Bruno and his brother Arthus, who ~~had~~ had left germany with us shared one room, my parents, lothar and I slept in the other room.

The first few days were nice, peaceful, but unfortunately, Bruno went back to his old ways, and his not so pleasant behavior. He constantly wanted praise for saving our lives, threw up to my parents, that ~~the~~ send us the visas and demanded constant thanks. This went on over the next few years and making my parent' life very miserable. My poor mother had to do all the work, cooking scrubbing floors and taking care of all the needs of everybody. My mother suffered terrible. Bruno could have hired help for very little money and make life easier for my mother. My mothers' suffering affected us all. I had a visitor from a young girl who lived 2 minutes away from us. She had heard that we were coming and was happy to have a girl in her neighborhood. Edith Arm. I am still in touch with her. My uncle tried to discourage this friendship. Edith did not have a very good reputation. She had sexual encounters already at the age of 12 years. Well I liked her, she was a good friend





helped me to learn spanish. I spoke german to her, she responded in spanish. When one learns a language, it is initially a little frightening to speak it. Also one can not think of the words, but understands it.

A few days later we got a visit from a man on horseback, who came to take our picture for the CEDULA. That was a kind of identification card. He wore a cute little Tiroler hat, was very pleasant and his name was Dr. Herbert KOHN (WE all know him now) He was so very nice and kind to me. Later on he told me that at that moment he knew that he was going to marry me sometime in the future. Well, marriage was a long way off for me.

I had to start school, which was in Batey. Every morning a station wagon came to pick us up. It was extremely <sup>hard</sup>. Not knowing 1 word of spanish, it was very hard and depressing for me to sit in this classroom like a dummy. Before I go on I must say that shortly after we were there I became very unhappy. The climate was so difficult, language, difficult people, there was constant talk about couples having affairs with everybody. I was rather naive and did not know what they were talking about and could not believe that people would sleep with anybody they were not married to. Sounds funny now !!!!!!!

Well I started school. I had been an excellent student in Germany and it made me very unhappy that my grades, just were miserable. Every teacher and student ~~spoke German~~ knew german but it was not spoken in the classroom. Finally the principle, Mr. Ferran offered to stay after school to give me private lesson in spanish. He had a reputation as a ladies man, but this did not bother me. I was a little ugly girl and he was certainly not interested in me. To this day I am very grateful to him. It took me 1 year to learn it and feel comfortable to use the language.





It was also a fun time. There were the Saturday evening movies and dances. Most of the girls in my class had already boyfriends. I did not have one and this was difficult for me. "One wants to be one of the crowd". The girls related all kinds of adventures which they supposedly had already. In order not to be or feel left out, I had a diary and wrote a whole story in it about boyfriends. of course nothing was true, but I "Wanted to proof to them I also had my Experience." I am glad my mother never got hold of this book, full of phantasies, her hair would have turned gray. Once when I was in Batey, I saw a young man walking in front of his room and I absolutely fell head over heels in love with him. At the time I knew that he had a girlfriend, whom he loved very much, but it was as if lightening struck me and I decided then that this is the man I would like to spend my life with. Never again had I had such strong feelings about a man.

His name was Rolf Sommer. More about this boy, my feelings and our eventual relationship ,later. I went with Edith to the dances on Saturday night, I was always very shy, a little wall-flower. Then one evening a young man, extremely handsome, very good dancer ask me to dance with him and a nice friendship developed. His name was Freddy Adler. Unfortunately he did not have a very good reputation, because he flirted with all the girls, they all fell for him but he did not stay with any of them for long. That made it even more unbelievable for me, always feeling ugly, that he stayed with me and really was very sincere in his feelings.

My parents were now given a farm with 9 cows but they had to move further out to ATRAVERSADA. It was too far out for the station wagon to pick me up for school/ So I was given a Horse, rode to Ediths house, where I left the horse and went into Batey and to school in the schoolbus.





When my parents were given the farm they were promised a house also. However this was not the case. They had to share a house with another couple, Erich and Anita Klein. This created problems for my parents, especially my mother. This woman claimed that my mother was not clean enough, my mother was the cleanest woman I have ever known.

My uncle Bruno moved with us and he continued to make life miserable for all of us. At one point he complained that I badmouthed him about giving me a Mule instead of a horse to learn to ride on. He had indeed given me a Mule, which was very wrong of him because these animals are very stubborn and unpredictable, but never did I say anything to anybody. It may have been his own conscience, which bothered him. He used this toupset my parents, telling them for the 1000<sup>th</sup> time that he had saved their life and we should be more grateful to him. At this point I would like to describe, the behavior of my horse, when I wanted to go into Batey on Saturday afternoons, that horse, would not go past the corner where I usually turned in during the week to go to Edith. The horse got up on his hind legs and refused. Most of the time after some doing, this horse went where I wanted to go. Edith and I had fun down in Batey. When I think about it now, it was for us a carefree time. I still get that same feeling now when I think about those times. The knowledge of my parents' unhappiness, made it sad for me. I wished they could have had an easier time.

At that time I decided that I wanted to become a nurse. I discussed this with my parents, who in turn spoke to the people in the hospital and after some discussion I was told that I had to go to school in the morning and in the afternoon I could start working in the hospital. Living rather far from Batey, it was



difficult to do this. It was then decided that I should move into Batey. I was given a room to share with another young woman Gerda Simon. We got along well, except once she accused me of having stolen one of her brassiers. I would not have known where to put it at that time. She was such a sloppy person, finally she found it among her other junk. My friendship with Freddie Adler came to an end. The hospital administration was very much against this friendship because of his reputation. I went out with him secretly anyway for a while longer but it was difficult. I then became friendly with a young man Hans Altenberg. He was 11 years older than I. His mother had come over on the same boat with us, we had become very friendly and she liked me very much. Hans had been engaged in Germany. However his fiance had gone to Holland, he knew that she was put in a concentration camp and he had gotten some kind of information that she had been killed there. We went for walks in the evenings. The dark countryroads, with a full moon were very romantic. He was very kind and nice to me, a very sincere young man and I felt that he was falling in love with me. I was very fond of him but I do not believe that I ever loved him the way he loved me. As young as I was I realized there was something very wrong with him. Whenever something did not go his way or he had to make a decision, he had a stomachache. He could not stand up to his mother. Ane decision was left to me, he never made any suggestion on what to do. I wanted someone stronger and take charge. It was evident that he really fell in love with me very deeply. We had a nice friendship going, on my part. We went for walks and had very nice talks. To some extent I loved him and after a few month he suggested that we become engaged. At this time I do not remember why I agreed to it, I could not imagine spending





23  
my life with him. Aside from this I could not get Rolf Sommer out of my mind. I felt such love for him, even being aware I might never be able to become involved with him. My heart was not with Hans.

I started to work in the hospital, but it did not turn out to be what I wanted. The head nurse, Martha Mondschein was extremely difficult, she screamed at us, was so obsessive compulsive about everything, she looked for something to criticize. She was so strict making my life so miserable. I went home to my mother crying that I wanted to quit, but she reminded me that I wanted very much to become a nurse, and how I had carried on before to get that position, she told me to stick it out and I was later very grateful to her that she did not allow me to quit. She reminded me that life is not always what one wants it to be and one has to learn to deal with difficult situations. What a wise woman my mother was. Her advice has helped me all through my life, dealing with disappointment and not falling apart. As part of the training in the hospital, we also had classes. Biology, anatomy, Pathology<sup>pl</sup>. Every one of the physicians taught a course. Chemistry was taught by Dr. Herbert Kohn. I not only was not interested in this subject, but I could not grasp it. At the end of the semester I had a fabulous report card, all A's but in Chemistry I got an E (equivalent to a 5) (To this day I have not forgiven him for it and bring it up quite frequently) We worked together in the outpatient clinic, in the Lab and did deliveries, which most of the time happened at night. Martha Mondschein was very interested in interrupting our personal plans. One Saturday evening she asked me if I had any plans and when I told her I was going to a dance, with a smirk she said "No you are not, there is a delivery".





24  
21

At this time we were offered a chance to become registered nurses. We would have to go to the Capital, Ciudad Trujillo and study at the HOSPITAL INTERNACIONAL. There were 3 of us Anny Feld, Helga Ehrlich and myself. The Administration of our Settlement had made the arrangements and in June 1944 the 3 of us went to C.T. Upon arriving in C.T. we stayed for 1 or 2 days at the Pension of Mrs. Berg, a very nice lady, then we went to the hospital. We were assigned our rooms. The nun greeted us very friendly and then read us the rules. One of those was that we had to get up at 5 in the morning to go to church, before our training was to start every day. We informed her that we could not do that. In a very polite way she told us that under those circumstances we could not stay. They really did not want us there but could obviously not refuse, so this was a very convenient way out for them not to accept us. So what she meant was "no church, no training". We packed our bags and went back to Mrs. Berg. Once resettled there, we called up a few boys we had known, from Sosua. Peter Ehrenhaft, Fredl Ungar, Heins Jacoby. They had a Carpentry in the City. We made a date with them for that same evening and had a fabulous time. We went to the movies, strolled on the Avenida Washington, held Hands, kissed and were very carefree teenagers. I think this was the first time in my life I felt, carefree, relaxed and extremely happy. To this day I remember it with happy feelings. I thought at the time I was falling in love with Heinz, he wrote me later several times. I was of course engaged to Hans Altenberg, but I did not take this seriously. Somehow I always knew that I would never marry him. Wolf Sommer was the man I wanted to spend the rest of life with. We stayed in the City a few more days, saw the boys every evening and then went back to Sosua.



15  
I was not happy having to face Hans, but I had no choice. In the meantime, Rolf continued to be involved with his girl Ruth Kahn. This friendship was on and off, she could not make up her mind if she really wanted him. He knew how I felt about him. We wrote letters to each other, and one day Ruth Kahn went to the City. Rolf contacted me and we spend an afternoon together. It was just what I wanted, but I knew it could only last 1 afternoon and in the evening, being alone, I did not want to see Hans, I felt very sad.

I resumed my work in the hospital in Sosua. It was difficult, having to work with Ruth Kahn. We worked very hard. In Sept 1944 a Jaundice epidemic broke out. The whole hospital was filled up and we had to put some of the patients in one particular barrack. We worked day and night, without any time off in between. However it was an exciting time. One very funny incident happened. One morning I took the temperature of one patient, Erich Tuna. When I took the thermometer out of his mouth, the tip had been bitten off. We looked everywhere and could not find it. It is really dangerous, with the mercury in there. Since we could not find it we assumed he had swallowed it and he was given Castor oil. He turned even more yellow. He survived it and had not dangerous reaction. This was one of the funny incidents. Another time. I was on night duty, it was not busy and I could sleep a little while. Heinz Cohn woke me up to find out what time it was. He confessed that really he could not sleep and wanted company. I was quite angry, but there was nothing I could do. We also had an elderly man who thought he was very funny, constantly untying the nurses apron strings. One of the doctors, Hans Broch, was after every woman, every nurse, came in the middle of the night to do some hanky panky. He never did that to me because I was an ugly duckling.





In my privat life I did have some fun. Even though I was not very happy with Hans ,but we went horsebackriding, swimming and went to dances. My parents were very unhappy. My mothers' brother Bruno made their life miserable, by constantly reminding them that HE saved their lives and therefore they had to do whatever he demanded. I don't remember if I mentioned, that when I started working in the Hospital, I moved into Batey. First I lived with an elderly lady, Doris, who one night had her boyfriend come into our room by climbing through the window, then I lived with a young girl, Gerda Simon. She was very sloppy and once she accused me of stealing her brassier, I would not know where to put it. I forme a very deep sincere friendship with Helmuth Herzog. He was Helga Ehrlich's boyfriend, but she did not treat him well and he and I spend hours together , talking about "OUR TROUBLES" He roomed together with Rolf Sommer and knew my feelings about him. In general, life in Sosua was ok. Although there were frequent fights. Many people who had come there as a couple, only got married in Europe to get out and really did not belong to each other. They were mismatched. There was a saying that when you got up in the morning one did not know who was still married, or who slept with whom.

In Nov.1944 I got a little note from Rolf in which he said that his friendship with Ruth Kahn was finished and we could start our friendship. Up to then it was the happiest day of my life. Something I had laterally prayed for. We got together that same evening and a deep, loving relationship began. At least on my part. I loved Rolf so very deeply, I felt so very much fulfilled. Now I know that he used me, to make the other girl jealous, but at the time, until he left for the U.S. on March 6,46.

I was happy beyond believe. When my friendship with Rolf began I wrote a letter to Hans Altenberg, who had gone to live in





Ciudad Trujillo a few month before and had hoped that in time I would follow him. I told him that he was much to old for me and that I just could not marry him. It was a very big step to do that. Hans had always told me, if I broke up our engagement he would kill himself. I did not take it lightly but I could not face a lifetime of misery, marry him, even taking the chance that he may carry out his threat. He did not respond to my letter, but he also did not kill himself.

My 1½ year with Rolf was for me a once in a lifetime love, at least on my part. Although we had friends and got together with them, for me it was just fine, to be just alone with Rolf.

One couple was Anny Feld and Gert Ohrbach. Anny became pregnant and we took her to Puerto Plata one evening\*. Rolf drove the car we had borrowed from somebody. On our way back late at night the car stalled and we could not get it going. We were about ½ hour away from Sosua. We decided that Rolf stay with Anny, he was the only one who ~~knew~~ how to drive, in case he could start it. Gert and I walked to Sosua. That was fine until we came to the Beach by full moon. Had anybody seen us they would have said, he and I had a relationship. Gossip grew quick in Sosua. So we ducked down and almost on our stomachs did we drag along the beach. We went to the mechanic, woke him up, told him some kind of story where we had been. He drove us back to the place where Rolf and Anny had been, fixed the car and we could be on our way to Sosua. The next morning Anny could not come to work, we told everybody she had a sore throat, including Dr. Kohn who went to her house, looked in her throat but could not find anything wrong. I think at that moment he knew what the problem was.

As I said we had lots of fun with our friends as life went on.



Rolf never promised to marry me, or made any kind of commitment. In that regard he was very honest, but deep within I always hoped that he would see how deeply my feelings were for him and get more involved. What he did promise, was that when he could get to the States after the war, he would send me an affidavit. He had a cousin here. The war ended in Aug 1945 and I knew that would soon be the end of our friendship. He did get an affidavit from his cousin and left Sosua on March 6, 1946. A very, very sad day for me. ~~xxxx~~ That evening I was on night duty in the maternity. In a way I was glad I had work to do in order to overcome my sorrow. As Rolf left he had asked Dr. Kohn "to look after me and take care of me". In his nice, quiet, gentle way he came that evening to the hospital to keep me company and distract me from my pain. I had letters from Rolf but that did not replace his presence. Dr. Kohn continued to be so kind to me. Several times he had some very nice presents for me, but I did not accept them I felt it was just not "right and Proper" on my part. On April 8 the "DREADED letter" arrived from Rolf. He said somehow, beyond his control he had met Ruth Kahn again and they had decided to become engaged, but he would keep his promise of sending me papers to come to the states. Again I was on call that night and again Dr. Kohn came to be with me and give me the emotional support I so very much needed at that time. He was the only person I told about the letter. He stayed with me for almost 1/2 the night., and offered me his friendship. I do not know how I would have gotten through that night and the next few months without him. Word did get around that my relationship with Rolf had ended and into my life came Robert Ferstl, a nice guy but I really was neither interested nor ready for another relationship. I did go out with him a few times to distract myself. Dr. Kohn also showed more interest than





just a friendship. Once I was sick and they both appeared on my door, one with a book, the other one with cookies and a book. I did not tell my parents about the letter for some time.

First of all they had their own problems, and I was afraid they would say bad things about Rolf. When I finally did tell them, they were ok. Dr. Kohn who had always waited in the background to start a friendship with me., became more assertive.

He invited me to his house to listen to the Opera on Saturday afternoons, he went horsebackriding with me ,took me out to dinner

On one occasion they played Beethovens 7 th . We had Schnitzel to eat and since then named this symphony "The Schintzel Symphony"

Initially I was not in love with him, but I knew he was a very decent man, who I could always rely on, who would never hurt me and at that time it was what I needed. My Parents were delighted. Here was this nice young Jewish doctor, what more could one asked for once daughter. Frequently he was invited to my parents house, especially on Friday evening for a Schabbath dinner. Except for the grease on the soup he liked it very much. As the months passed, we became very close and I realized that I fell in love with him. There was never a kinder, loving, more decent person than Dr. Kohn, who by now I called HERBERT. He asked me to marry him, but there was a problem. Herbert had already his affidavit to go to the states, waited only for his Visa. I had nothing. In time I got two, one from the Josephsons, my fathers cousin, one through Helmuth Herzog and his friend. Another problem arose. Herbert lost his job in the Hospital. DORSA wanted him not to treat the natives unless they paid prior to treatment. He refused to do that saying that when people are sick one does not hold back treatment if they could not pay. Dr. Freymuth, a young inexperienced Dr. said he could do that and he was hired.





He did some very dangerous things. Being very inexperienced, this doctor caused a great deal of damage to peoples' health and he was finally fired, Herbert got his job back, being allowed to treat patients in his way and we were able to set a wedding day. We had a pregnant lady who was due on Aug 19 so we felt Sept 7, 1947 was a safe day. The evening before our wedding, Herbert took me out to my parents to stay the night there. As we were getting into the car, the woman's husband came, announcing that she was in labor. Herbert & I spend the night delivering the baby who was born at 5 am. At 8 am we were to be in Puerto Plata for the civil ceremony.. We were quit tired and later Herbert always "JOKED" he only said "yes" because he was tired and did not know what he was saying. Also that already before our wedding we spend the night together in the delivery room/

After the civil ceremony, my parents had prepared a lovely lunch for the family. In the afternoon we were married in the temple by Mr. Neuman who really was not a Rabbi. No sooner was the ceremony over, Herbert had disappeared. There was a very sick man out on the farm and Herbert had gone to see him. He did make it to my parents house later on, for the festivities. My mother and her friend had prepared a lovely dinner, for many people. She also had made a 7 tier wedding cake. Since there was nobody else to take care of all the patients, we did not have a honeymoon. We settled into our beautiful home, and were very happy together. In March 1948 I got my Visa and had to go to the U.S. otherwise it would have expired. I left Sosua on april 12, 1948. I was terribly upset to leave Herbert. Here I lived with my brother and his in-laws and it was horrible. I tried to work, had 2 jobs but it did not work out. I made several calls to Washington to



31  
get my "FIRST PAPERS". one needed that to leave the country and be able to return. Well I was not successful, but I found a lawyer and she told me I could leave with just the card I did have and I did not even have to come back every 6 month to renew it. She could do this for me and I had to pay \$ 50.-

On June 6 I flew back to Herbert. What a joy to <sup>(be)</sup> united with Herbert again, as he picked me up from the Airport. I resumed my work at the Hospital and started "Bugging" Herbert about having a baby. He was hessitant, waiting for his Visa, not being sure about the future once we would come to the states. I convinced him that, no matter what would happen, our love would always help us to deal with any situation. In January 1949 I found out I was pregnant. WHAT JOY. Our friends , the Bauers wanted me to come to the states, so that the Baby would be a U S citizen. However I wanted to be with Herbert for this most important event in our lives. I had a very good pregnancy, except from time to time there was some funny feeling as if the baby had seizures, We went to Puerto Plata to Dr. Vasquez, but he could not determine the cause. Much later we were told babies have hickups.

Danny was born on Sept 12, 1949 after 3½ hour delivery. We were so happy, he was healthy. Dr. Vasquez was supposed to deliver the baby but he never made it on time. Herbert had hardly time to put the gloves on. At 9pm Danny was born. I was the happiest girl in the world. This was the most exciting, memorable event in my life. After 5 days we took him home and when he was 1 week old we had the Bris. Herbert also did this with my father officiating as a Rabbi. So we can say to Danny his Father did everything.....

I nursed Danny, he was a good Baby. I went back to work and took him along in the carriage. Our dog "Buschi " guarded " it.





2  
I had lost a lot of weight and Herbert was very worried that I might have something on my lungs. He protected me too much, did not allow me to push the carriage uphill from our house.

When I started to stop nursing Danny in March 1950 he developed some diarrhea. Nobody was really sure what it was. Herbert read up on it and was pretty sure that it was celiac Disease.

He got a special diet, no starch and a lot of medication and injections. He developed very well. To this day Danny likes to hear the story how his father saved his life and frequently he voices his desire to do more for his father.....

As skinny as he had been at birth, he turned into a most beautiful child. People stopped on the street to look at him.

I was very happy with this lovely child and loving husband, but there was always some sadness that my parents could not come to our house because of my father's previous TB. Herbert was probably overconcerned. Only on the street did I meet my parents with Danny. Soon Herbert got his Visa to come to the U S and we left Sosua in May 1951. For my parents it was very sad to see us and their first grandchild leave. I am much more aware of this now that we have our little Jacob whom we adore and can't wait to see from one visit to the next. We flew to Florida and from there to South Carolina to visit our friends the Bauers. We stayed with them for about a week, driving to a house in the mountains. It was not a pleasant time. We had to make so many adjustments. For instance eating lunch in a cafeteria, very quickly, icecold drinks all this was strange for us. Also their child, 7 years old was not very nice to Danny. From there we went to N.Y. stayed in a Hotel, Prescott, the porters were on Strike. All very disturbing for us. Herbert had contacted Hospitals from Sosua for his Internship. Risi and Heini Hurwich who lived





in Bridgeport, Conn. got us a furnished room, where Herbert had gotten an Internship at the Hospital there.

Our Landlord was Mr. & Mrs Kahn. They were fairly nice to us, they were crazy about Danny. She had some crazy rules, some of which made my life rather uneasy. Herbert started his internship the first of June. It was hard for him, working 3 days and 2 nights on end. He was not so young anymore and the hospital had only 9 Interns instead of 18. On his day off he came home but never stayed for the night. Had he been home he would have to get up at 5 am, take 2 busses to be in the hospital by 7 am. Sleeping there he could sleep until they called him in the morning. It was somewhat lonely but Danny and I had fun spending time together. I wanted to work, to earn some money. Mrs. Kahn got me a job with a family who had just gotten a baby and both parents went to work, they had a business. I took care of the baby and did some light housework. Their name was Katzenstein and the Baby's name was David. They were very good to me. On many occasions she took me out, always paid for me knowing that I did not have any money. They were ultra orthodox, but she trusted me. I could take Danny along and was very grateful for it. I used to play with him for a little while and then I explained to him, that I have other things to do and he kept himself busy. Only during the winter months were there some minor inconveniences I carried Danny, putting his head under my "SQUIRREL COLLAR" of my coat. It was very cold for us. Well we survived this too. On weekends Danny and I went for walks or visited Friends, but I felt better being alone with him. Some friends were not very tolerant having a child around and I felt they made him and me nervous. After 1 year, Mrs. Katzenstein stayed home, but she got me a job with one of her friends who just had a baby and I





34  
was hired fo 2 weeks, day and night. In those days, people got \$ 12.- a day, but because I took Danny along, they only paid me \$ 8.-. Only this family was not very nice to me or Danny. Thereafter I had several jobs taking care of Babies only a few days at a time.

In the meantime Herbert looked around for a residency in Psychiatry He would have preferred to become a pedeatrician, but the pay for a residency in that field paid so very liytle, which we could not afford to do. He settled on childpsychiatry. He was accepted at Central Islip State Hospital and we moved there in Oct1952. While we were still in Bridgeport, we felt it was time to have another baby and in May 1952 I knew I was pregnant. We were very happy about this.

In C.I we had a very nice apartment at Hofman house. The center was Building 88. I walked there every day so that Danny had children to play with. In Dec.1952 Herbert went to N.Y. to take his Stateboard. That was kind of lonely for us but we occupied our time together very productively. We played, I read to Danny and we had fun. Soon we got an apartment at Building 88. It had no kitchen and we ate in the Dinningroom. The food was not very good , but we were happy to be there and not so isolated anymore. In Febr.1953 David was born . Herbert took me to the Hospital at 2 am and he was born at 5 am. He was a healthy , beautiful Baby. I took him home after 5 days. He had "brought" Danny a present "AUTO OBEN". So Danny was quite happy with his brother and we also let him help us taking care of David. There was very little jealousy. David was a very good baby. I nursed him for 6 months, He started to walk very early, always with a "Schraungenzinger " (screwdriver) or a "NUNI" ( any kind of electrical cord or hose) in his hands. Other people thought we were crazy to allow that but Herbert felt, David was so





determined to have these things , he might as well have them when we were present and teach him how to handle them. He never hurt himself. Very early he was able to handle these tools in a productive way. When he was 5 years old he fixed a projector for someone in the house.

We had lovely grounds there and I spend a great deal of time outside with the children and with the other mothers. We felt very safe on the grounds. Some patients were allowed to walk around and they were so grateful being allowed to talk to us and the kids. Every New Years all the doctors wives planned a party at Robins Hall. It was always very nice and successful.

Herbert used to got to N.Y. several evenings a week for lectures and analysis. We really liked it in C.I. While I was a little lonely, I took care of the children and it was o.k. We finally got an apartment with kitchen, and that made it of course much easier for us. Again we thought it would be time to have another baby. In April 1955 I knew I was pregnant again. Danny and David were really excited about another sibling. I had a very easy pregnancy. The baby was due on Dec 19. Dr. Garber told me not to have the baby on Christmas "not to spoil " his x-mas dinner. Well Frank had to do it, but with consideration. Again Herbert took me to the Hospital at 2 am on Dec. 25 and the baby was born at 5 am . ( 5 seems to be a magisal number in our Family)

What excitement there was in the hospital about this baby being born on x-mas. He was a pretty child, nursed well and was very easy to take care of. Of course he also brought gifts for his brothers. They really took care of him. Danny once diapered him while I was out, being aware that Frank cried when he was wet or dirty. David took care of him in the car for short periods when I just had to run into a store. All 3 boys always got along with each





other. Of course sometimes each one wanted to be just with their own friends. We tried to instill in them that friends are good to have but brothers should always be there for each other and to stick together and help each other. I think we were successful ! In Dec 1958 Herbert went to N.Y. to take the Board in Psychiatry. Of course he passed with flying colors.

It was sad that my parents lived so far away and could not partake in the growth of the children. We wrote very regularly to them and told them everything about the boys.

Even though Herbert was very busy, he always had time to play with the children. Even when he studied for the Boards.

He also took care of the boys when I occasionally went to N.Y. in the evening to do some shopping.

After Herbert had the Board, the question arose should we stay or look for another job, or go into private practice. Danny had started school, the curriculum was much too easy for him, he was bored, came running home and we felt we should leave to a place with better schools. Herbert looked around, went to several interviews and got a job here in Passaic, at St. Mary's Hospital. They had opened a child guidance clinic and he was hired as the director. He had previously taken courses in child psychiatry at several clinics.

We moved to Passaic on March 7, 1960. Herbert had already started working here 3 days a week, while we still lived in C.I.

With the help of Martha Bronner we found a very lovely house (WE still live in it).

In the beginning it was a little difficult. All kinds of minor mishaps happened. David was walking home from school alone, while I frantically looked for him at school, Frank put a penny in the powerbox of the T.V. and Danny for the first time in his life was in a class with bright children and he had to work!!





37  
Martha Bronner was very helpful and we became very good friends  
Herbert began to work fulltime at the clinic, I tried to  
straighten out the house, and the children settled in nicely.  
We joined the Temple and met new people. We became very good  
friends with the Kuchinskys, met Magda and Eugene Friedman and  
their son Barry.

We had sunk all our money into the downpayment and there was nothing  
left for furniture. Well we made do. Herbert had had a backproblem  
for several years. At one time in C.I he had lifted a patient  
onto the x ray table. Nobody could find out what was wrong with  
him. Well, shortly after we came to Passaic a Dr. found out he had  
2 slipped discs. Thats all we needed! In the meantime. my parents  
had gotten restitution money from Germany and they planned to  
come here on junll, 1960. We picked them up from the airport and  
it was such an emotional reunion with the children, but most  
of all with Tante Lina who my father had not seen since we had left  
Germany and really never expected to see again. Herbert was hospi-  
talized in N.Y. and mperated the middle of June and my parents were  
very helpful for me with the children.

Herbert recuperated completely. A/side from his job, he opened his  
own office. The practice build up very nicely.

From then on my parents came here every year. We had the basement  
build out for them. Life in Passaic was good. We gave parties, were  
invited and had a good life.

As the years went on I felt I had to make plans to do something  
with my time once the children would all leave for college.

In order to get back into the "outside world" or possible job, I  
enrolled in a course at the Metropolitan Museum, a music  
appreciation course. Later on Martha and I went to the New school  
and took some courses, not for credit, just to learn to concentrate  
again.





In 1967 the child guidance clinic closed and Herbert became the director of the Mental health clinic. Shortly thereafter he hired Sybil Schreiber as a chief Social worker. In april 1969 he came home one day and told me the clinic had a request for service for a 12 year old spanish speaking girl and he asked me to come and translate. Sybil would interview the child. I liked the idea but was a little nervous not having spoken spanish in 18 years. Well the first appointment was broken, to my relief but we did see the child in another week. I translated for Sybil. A few days later Herbert came home and told me that it really is not good to see this child for treatment with a translator, it takes up a lot of time and looses in the translation. They wanted me to treat the child. I had never done this, but Sybil explained to me "it is just like being a good mother, just be as you have been with your children". The child had no mother and needed love and attention. Sybil said she would supervise me after each session. Well I saw the girl and she really got better. Subsequently they had other applications from spanish speaking people and I was asked to do the first interview by myself. Herbert gave me a great deal of pointers and support. I then dictated it and Sybil presented it in the Staffmeeting. Shortly thereafter she invited me to the meetings so that I could present the Intake myself. The clients were assigned to me for treatment. It was a little scary but I soon found out, for the most part one has to listen, be sympathetic and if possible help clients with some advise. Be yourself and be natural. I did form a good relationship with my clients. In october 1970 Sybil approached me and told me that the Board had decided to give me a Salary but I would have to commit myself to working 10 hours a week. I was not only very surprised





but quite honored. Not having any training in these field, to get a paying job offered. She also gave me a choice of supervisor, Herbert or she. I decided it was better to see her.

I felt if now I have a paid job as a "therapist" I better go back to school, more seriously than before. I applied to the new School where they had a course for Mental health worker. One needed to be interviewed to be accepted, which I was. Every Wednesday I went to school. I did not really like it, because, I did not learn a great deal of new material. I learned more from Sybil and Herbert, but I needed that course to have some schooling and credits.

In the meantime, I got more patients assigned and it worked out well. I especially liked to work with children. In Jan. 1971 the clinic opened a nursery for emotionally disturbed children. It was called the therapeutic preschool or TPS for short. I became very involved in that program and was assigned to do the intake on these children and then treat the parents. I was really very happy with my work.

Working only 10 hours a week gave me plenty of time to take care of Herbert and the boys. After my mothers death in Dec 1967 my father came every year during the summer months to stay with us. When he came in June 1971 he complaint of problems with his bladder. We took him to the hospital in Paterson and he was operated by Dr. Sporer. He had cancer of the bladder. We wanted him to stay with us for a longer time, but he insisted on going back to be present for his Friends, Reuthers, 25 th wedding anniversary. These people were always so good to my parents and we understood that he wanted to be there. He went back in August. Herbert, I David and Frank went to Europe that year including Berlin. I had previously rejected the I dea of going to Berlin, but I suddenly felt I wanted to walk those streets in a city were the Nazis had us dead before, now we were still alive, but They were dead





40

While we were away, I got a telegram from my brother that my father was very sick. We cut our vacation short and came home. I went immediately to S. D. to be with my father. He had a nun taking care of him due to an insurance he had. He recognized me and it was very painful to see him suffer so much. I told the doctor there to keep my father comfortable but not do any heroic action to prolong his suffering. Years earlier my father had told me that his father suffered terrible before he died and I should never allow anyone to do this to him. Unfortunately in S.D. a woman is not listened to and he did not respect my request. I went back home and 2 weeks later went there again with Herbert he told the doctor the same and now it was honored. We came home again and 1 week later on Oct. 9, 1971 my father passed away. I called my brother and he went there immediately. I did not feel it necessary to do that, since I had always gone to see my parents while they were alive and I could do something for them. My father was buried the same day and there was no reason for me to go. My brother and I negotiated about the house. Eventually he bought my part of the house in Sosua. Our relationship fluctuated. Lothar was never fond of me. Although I showed him, that I divided the money <sup>(of father)</sup> equally Lothar still insisted I had cheated him. A day before my father had passed away I took all his money out of the account and put it in my name, at the advise of a lawyer. That night I had a terrible dream. My father said to me "Why did you steal all my money". That's how I had felt when I was standing in the Bank making the transaction. There was really nothing immoral or indecent about it, but that's how I felt. I was sad that Lothar and I could not establish a better relationship but he was such a liar, had such a need to distort everything and we just could not find something to bring us closer.





41  
I also had no contact with his son Michael, who treated his mother Inge, terrible. My brother instilled such hatred in the boy for the mother. Only when my brother died in Dec 1983 did he call me to ask for money for the funeral. I could not give it to him and I never heard from Michael.

Our life went on. I always felt we were a closeknit family there was a great deal of love among all of us. Danny went to College and Medical school, David went to College and so did Frank. I missed them but I was glad I had my work in the clinic. At this point I had increased my hours to 31½ hrs weekly, almost full time. Herbert was busy in his Office, aside from his work in the clinic and we had our porch converted, also added on some space, into his office. It was much nicer that he was home in the evening and did not have to be downtown, where it was not safe anymore.

The children did well in school, we went on very nice vacation sometimes with the children other times only Herbert & I. went. Everybody graduated from College, Danny from Medical School and Frank got a job in New Orleans. David stayed in Boston where he had a job. At this point I have to say that the 3 boys always got along very well. This was always my biggest wish and David recently stated that he remembered my saying to them it is important to have friends, but they come and go, brothers should always be here for each other. Herbert and I seem to have achieved this. I was always sad not to have had such a relationship with Lothar, I had this with my brother Ernst, but we only had each other for a very short time!!!

In June 1983 Herbert retired from the Clinic. They made him a very nice party at the Pennington Club. Everybody was sad to see Herbert





42  
leave the clinic especially the patients, respected and loved him very much. Over the years, Sybil was at times very nasty to Herbert, he never told her off, being the nice man, but I spoke up making it very clear to her that I am not his mother but if she does not change her ways, I would leave. Then she behaved better but only for a short time. Once she replied "I am only nasty to people like very much". That, of course is stupid. She was never able to really replace Herbert with an adequate physician, but it took her several years before she told me under tears "I miss Herbert very much and nobody has been able to take his place".

This holds true till this date Dec 1991

Herbert took care of ALL patients, after he left they never had a trained doctor for children.

In 1985 Herbert gave up his private practice. His memory started to be slow, he forgot things. Therefore we also curtailed our traveling. The last vacation we took was in Aug 1987 with Magda and Eugene Friedman to England, Belgium and Holland.

It was very nice. When we came back we planned our 40th wedding anniversary. It turned out to be very nice.

Everybody enjoyed it. In Nov of that year we visited Danny and Frank introduced us to a very lovely young lady Susan Bernstein. In Dec 87 we had a party for Herbert's 75th birthday. Frank brought Susan home. Everybody was crazy about her, including us.

I may have described the last few years only in bits and pieces, but they were not of such importance as the first few years, mainly in Germany and Sosua. I also jumped back and forth with the years. I do not feel this will matter. This story was written mainly to give my children and grandchildren an idea of my life and roots. The highlights of the last 2 years are known to us all. Frank and Susan's Marriage and the birth of little Jacob our pride and joy.



43  
In june 1990 I decided that I would retire the end of that year. Had I been given permission not to work evenings I would have stayed on part time. This did not come through and I stopped workin on Dec 31,1990. In the meantime I was asked by the director of the Guidance Guild Nursery,Carol, to do the Consultation, I had done as part of my clinicwork, to do it on my own. I agreed after making sure that it would not be illegal.

I had a beautiful party at the Pennington club on Dec5,1990. When I left on Dec 31 st I felt a little strange, having been there for 22 years. To this day I have never regretted my decision to retire. I can now be with Herbert and be able to Babysit our little Jacob whom we love very deeply.

I have never been bored ,be able to do things which were not possible while I worked. I have established a certain routine. This is my life story. If I left something out, it may not be important. I tried to give all of you some Idea of were we came from, what we went through to be here and nobody should ever forget our heritage. Little Jacob will be able to know a little about his ancestors.

Herbert and I have a beautiful family. Our children

Danny, David, Frank, Susan and Jacob have brought tremendous joy to us. Every jewish parent could be happy to have such caring children.We can always rely on them. It is a tremendous satisfaction that all the work we put into their upbringing was so successfull. We did it with love and our free will. Other parents did the same but are not so fortunate. We love you very much and hope you will never forget us.





I am a very fortunate person.

Growing up with loving parents  
and brother Ernst.

Married for 44 years to Herbert  
who has dedicated his life and  
love to me.

Having 3 wonderful sons, a warm and kind  
daughter-in-law, who is always ready to  
help.

My sunshine, little Jacob makes it complete  
Never forget your heritage and always be  
there for each other.

MAY GOD BLESS YOU.

My Love to you all.

Mom





August 2000

This summer, Al and I went on a tour in Europe. There was the regular schedule and several optional tours. One of them was a trip to Berchtesgarden, the Headquarters of Adolf Hitler, one of the most evil men in history, if not THE most evil man, where he had met with the world leaders to plan the destruction of the Jews. I spoke to Al and absolutely and vehemently refused to take this tour. Al understood my feelings completely, but being a good and compassionate person and psychologist, he did talk to me and encouraged me to go. I am sure he suspected that this could be a healing process for me. Since I felt so protected by him I agreed and we signed up to go there.

Needless to say, I was nervous, apprehensive and full of mixed emotions on the way there. The bus went up the mountain, beautiful scenery we could see when the clouds cleared. We went up to 3000 feet, then had to take a smaller bus to make it through the winding road. Then we took the elevator up to 6000 feet and then walked through a Tunnel, finally reaching the house. Did I dare go in, walk the same floor, this most evil man had walked on?

I did with trepidation, with Al on my side giving me support.

I felt something very powerful within me.

I am here, a member of a people, this feast

The answer is that I want to be a doctor.

There is no other way to do it.

It is a long and hard road.

But I am determined to do it.

I will study hard and work long hours.

I will not let anything stop me.

I will be a doctor, and I will be the best.

I will save lives and make a difference.

I will be a doctor, and I will be the best.

I will study hard and work long hours.

I will not let anything stop me.

I will be a doctor, and I will be the best.

I will save lives and make a difference.

I will be a doctor, and I will be the best.

I will study hard and work long hours.

I will not let anything stop me.

I will be a doctor, and I will be the best.

I will save lives and make a difference.

I will be a doctor, and I will be the best.

I will study hard and work long hours.

I will not let anything stop me.

I will be a doctor, and I will be the best.

I will save lives and make a difference.

I will be a doctor, and I will be the best.

I will study hard and work long hours.



who had walked here, wanted completely destroyed.  
I was breathing here, he is dead, no longer breathing  
I, W.E, have won. I conquered the beast. I  
literally trampled on Adolf Hitler !!!

I can not see movies of the Holocaust, knowing  
the suffering of my people, but here I had  
triumphed and I finally had overcome my fears,  
my inner suffering and with that, my failures  
which can and does destroy the ability to lead an  
emotional healthy life.

There was a kind of closure for me.

No, I will NOT forget the past and what  
happened, but I have achieved an inner  
peace.

I can live and enjoy my life with tranquility

R. Kuhn



